

S O M E
REMARKS
 O N
Mr. French's Collection, &c.
 I N A
LETTER
 T O A
Member of Parliament.

S I R,

MR. Fr— having thought fit to chuse a new way of Attacking Mr. B—, which no Man would betake himself to, that did not trust more to the Strength of his *Party*, than his *Arguments*; I shall, in Compliance with your Desire, make a few obvious *Remarks* on this Dishonourable Method of Treating his Opponent; wherein it will appear, That his *Truth* and *Sincerity* are of a Piece with his *Judgment* and *Charity*.

For those *Passages* which Mr. Fr— has fairly Collected out of P—'s Writings, he would do well to Publish another *Book* to shew the World wherein the *Scurrility* and *Abusiveness* of 'em lies: For if bare *Reasoning* against such Things in the Establish'd Church, as are the chief *Occasions* and *Grounds* of Dissent from it, without using any other Expressions than are needful to set the Arguments in a true Light, must Right or Wrong pass for

for *Abusive Scurrility*, the Dissenters are in a very hard Case ; and must either be silent under perpetual Accusations, or have their necessary *Self-Defence* made a Crime. But since the Establish'd Church has in her *Articles* disclaim'd any Pretence to *Infallibility*, it would very ill become one of Her Inferior Clergy to endeavour to set up an *Inquisition-Tribunal* ; especially when he has not Judgment enough to distinguish between *Reason* and *Railing*, but takes it for an unpardonable *Scurrility* to find the least Fault, not only with any thing in the Church, but even with so inconsiderable a *Member* of it as *himself*. And therefore Mr. Fr— would have much better consulted his Credit, by solidly *Refuting* the Arguments contained in those Passages, than by barely *Transcribing* them : For I suppose, none will give him any Thanks for Mustering up so many plausible Arguments for the Cause of Protestant Dissenters, without offering one Syllable in *Answer* to 'em. But to save himself the Labour of that, he seems desirous they should be Answer'd *the shortest Way*.

But there are several *Passages* Cited in that *Collection* as Mr. B—'s, which Mr. Fr— is desired at his Leisure to clear his own *Sincerity* in ; because they carry a shrewd Appearance of very *unfair Dealing*. I shall content my self with observing a few *Instances* of that kind.

Mr. Fr— in his, *Ch. I. Numb. 14.* Cites these Words relating to the *Spiritual Courts* being entrusted with the Sentence of *Excommunication* in reference to all the Causes that come before 'em, *That thereby the most awful Judgment upon Earth is like to be made an ordinary Process, to Lacquey up and down for Fees.*

This he makes to be one of Mr. B—'s *Scurrilous* and *Abusive Reflections* ; whereas in Truth, those are not Mr. B—'s, but my Lord Bacon's Expressions, and are Cited by Mr. B— as his, and the *Book* refer'd to in the Margin wherein they are to be found : So that my Lord Bacon, and not Mr. B—, is answerable for the pretended *Scurrility* of them.

In the same *Ch. I. Numb. 18.* Mr. Fr— Cites this *Passage* out of Mr. B—'s *Vindic. of Mr. Osb.* (Printed 1689) as a *Scurrilous* and *Abusive* one. 'How soon might the Honour of our Nation revive, and our Arms become a Terror to our Enemies abroad, by an easie Triumph over those at home [*i. e.* the *Jacobites* in Great-Brittain, and the *Irish Papists* then in Rebellion,] if Abilities for Service, and a steddy Zeal for the Protestant Religion and the present Government, were the only Standard of such as are admitted to Civil and Military Employments : All other narrow Politicks will but hazard our Ruin, because they will but *divide*, and so *weaken* us.

Now I would fain know of Mr. Fr—, for what good Reason he was pleas'd to leave out those Remarkable Words that occur before the last Sentence : [*For that Maxim of his Majesty's carries its own convincing Evidence along with it, That the employing all his Protestant Subjects in his Service, will lay the best Foundation of Union among themselves. And all other, &c.*] This Clause, which he omits, refers to the late King WILLIAM's Speech

to his first Parliament; wherein (he saith,) 'He hop'd they would leave Room for the Admission of all Protestants that were able and willing to serve him; which was a thing would tend to the better Uniting 'em among themselves, and the strengthening 'em against their common Adversaries. Now since Mr. F—'s Words contain nothing in 'em, but what the late King had so publickly declar'd to be his Sense in that Matter; Mr. Fr— should either have forbore the Branding 'em for *Scurrilous* and *Abusive*, or involv'd the late King in the same *Censure*: But he had so much Wit in his Anger, as to foresee that would ill agree with the Veneration he pretends for the *Glorious Memory* of that Prince; and therefore he *wisely*, tho' not very *fairly*, dropt that part of the Paragraph.

Nay, if he make these *Expressions*, and the rest relating to the same Subject, *Ch. I. Numb. 17, 18, 20. Scurrilous* and *Abusive* ones, I would desire him to consider how far the Charge may extend: For I find that when, pursuant to that fore-mention'd *Speech* of the late King WILLIAM, a Clause was propos'd to be added to the Bill for *Abrogating the Oaths of Allegiance, &c. and Appointing other Oaths*, importing, 'That any Man should be sufficiently Qualify'd for any Office, &c. who receiv'd the Sacrament either according to the *Usage of the Church of England*, or in any other *Protestant Congregation, &c.* The Question being put, Whether such a Clause should be part of the Bill? It passed in the *Negative*: But the following *Lords* enter'd their *Dissent* in the *Reasons* following.

1. 'Because it gives a great part of the Protestant Freemen of *England* reason to complain of *Inequality* and hard *Usage*, when they are excluded from *Publick Employments* by Law. And also because it deprives the King and Kingdom of divers Men fit and capable to serve the Publick in several Stations, and that for a meer *Scruple of Conscience*, which can by no means render 'em suspected, much less disaffected to the Government.

2. 'Because his Majesty, as the common and indulgent Father of his People, having express'd an earnest desire of *Liberty* for tender *Consciences* to his Protestant Subjects: And my Lords, the Bishops having divers of 'em on several Occasions, profess'd an *Inclination* to, and own'd the reasonableness of such a *Christian Temper*; We apprehend it will raise *Suspicion* in some Mens Minds of something else than *Care of Religion* or the Publick, and different from a *Design* to heal our Breaches, when they find, that by confining *Secular Employments* to *Ecclesiastical Conformity*, those are shut out from *Civil Affairs* whose *Doctrine and Worship* may be *Tolerated* by Authority of Parliament; there being a Bill before us, by Order of the House to that purpose: Especially when without this exclusive Rigor, the Church is secur'd in all ^{of} *Priviledges and Preferments*, no body being hereby let into 'em who is not strictly conformable.

3. 'Because to set Marks of *Distinction* and *Humiliation* on any sort of Men who have not rendred themselves justly suspected to the Govern-

ment, as it is at all times to be avoided by the Makers of just and equitable Laws; so may it be particularly of ill Effect to the Reformed Interest both at Home and Abroad in this present Conjunction, which stands in need of the united Hands and Hearts of all Protestants, against the open Attempts and secret Endeavours of a restless Party, and a potent Neighbour, who is more Zealous than *Rome* it self, to plant Popery in these Kingdoms; and labours with the utmost force to settle his Tyranny upon the Ruins of the Reformation all thro' *Europe*.

4. ' Because it turns the Edge of a Law (we know not by what Fate) upon *Protestants* and Friends to the Government, which was intended against *Papists*, to exclude them from Places of Trust, as Men avowedly dangerous to our Government and Religion. And thus the taking the Sacrament which was enjoyn'd as a Means only to discover *Papists*, is now made a distinguishing Duty among Protestants to weaken the whole, by casting off a part of them.

5. ' Because Mysteries of Religion and Divine Worship are of Divine Original, and of a Nature so wholly distinct from the Secular Affairs of Politick Society, that they cannot be applied to those Ends. And therefore the Church by the Law of the Gospel, as well as common Prudence, ought to take care, neither to offend tender Consciences within it self, nor give offence to those without, by mixing their *Sacred Mysteries* with *Secular Interests*.

6. ' Because we cannot see how it can consist with the Law of God, Common Equity or the Right of any free-born Subject, that any one be punished without Crime. If it be a Crime not to take the Sacrament according to the usage of the Church of *England*, every one ought to be Punish'd for it, which no body Affirms. If it be no Crime, those who are capable and judg'd fit for Employments by the King, ought not to be punish'd with a Law of Exclusion, for not doing that which 'tis no Crime to forbear.

' If it be urg'd still as an Effectual Test to keep out *Papists*, the taking the Sacrament in these Protestant Congregations where they are Members, and known, will be at least as effectual to that Purpose.

Subscribed, Oxford, J. Lovelace, Wharton, Mordant, R. Mountague, W. Paget.

So that if Mr. Fr— will advance the Charge of *Scurrility* against those Expressions of Mr. B—s in the Passages referr'd to, he'll see that Mr. B— will have the Honour to suffer in very good Company. For he has only briefly touch'd on those *Reasons* against the *Sacrament-Test*, which those Noble Lords have so excellently enlarg'd upon. And 'tis evident, That they are much stronger against any *Sacrament Test* being continued in *Ireland*, where the whole Protestant Interest (thro' the great Disproportion which the Number of Irish *Papists* bears, to that of all Protestants put together) is more visibly endanger'd by it, then it cou'd be in *England*.

Again, Mr. Fr— Chap. II. Numb. 1. Produces the following Words as a *Scurrilous* and *Abusive Reflection* on the *Canons* of the *Eſtabliſh'd Church*.

‘Does he (*i. e.* the *Biſhop*) mean an *Unity* in *Human* unnecessary *Canons*, that ſhall reduce all true *Chriſtians* to an exact *Uniformity* in the *External Modes* of *Religion*? This is an *Unity* never to be effected, for the thing is morally impoſſible, or contrary to the *Apoſtles* *Direction*. *Let. p. 12.* And afterwards. ‘For any *Single Perſon* or *Collective Body* of *Paſtors* to preſcribe other *Terms* of *Unity* to the *Catholick Church* then *Chriſt* has done, is not only an *Uſurpation* of his *Legiſlative Power*, but one of the moſt effectual *Methods* that *Hell* has found out to raiſe *Schiſms* and *Diviſions* in it, and thereby to deſtroy *Chriſtian Love*. And he that knows not how fatal an *Engine* the needleſs and corrupt *Impoſitions* of *Ambitious Prelates* and their *Councils*, has been above theſe 1300 *Years* to deprave and tear the *Chriſtian Church*, under pretence of reducing it to an impoſſible *Uniformity*, is either a *Stranger* to *Church-Hiſtory*, or has too deep a *Tincture* of that wretched *Pride* and *Ignorance* that has animated *Patriarchs* and *Popes*. *Letter p. 13.*

To ſhew, How groſſly Mr. Fr— has *Abus'd* Mr. B—, I muſt deſire you to turn to *Let. p. 11.* where this *Q.* is propos'd by *Dean Manby* (then newly turn'd *Papiſt*.) *Whether by the Catholick Church be meant the variety of all Proteſtants, ſince they want her eſſential Mark Unity?*

Mr. B— there for the preſent wholly waves Mr. King's *Answer* to the *Queſtion*, and gives this as his own *Answer* to it, *That all the Reformed Churches* whoſe publick *Confessions* of *Faith* are extant, are true parts of the *Catholick Church*. And in Defence of that *Aſſertion* he thus *Reaſons* with *Dean Manby*.

If *D. M.* ask, Where is the eſſential *Mark* of the *Catholick Church*, *viz. Unity*, among the *Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independent, and Anabaptiſt Churches*?

Anſw. What *Unity* does he mean? If an *Unity* in the *Eſſentials* of *Chriſtian Faith* and *Holineſs*; Let him name me one of thoſe *Churches* that denies any *Eſſential Article* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, &c.

Or does Mr. M. (*i. e.* *Manby*) mean by *Catholick Unity*, an *Unity* in an *Human univerſal Head* of the *Church*, as *Pope* or *Council*? This is no better, &c.

And then follow the Words Cited by Mr. F—.

‘Or does he mean an *Unity* in *Human* unnecessary *Canons*, that ſhall reduce all *Churches* to an exact *Uniformity* in the *External Modes* of *Religion*, &c.

So that what Mr. B— there expreſſly ſpeaks to none but *Dean Manby* the *Papiſt*, Mr. Fr— aſſerts him to ſpeak to Mr. King (now *Arch-Biſhop* of *Dublin*.) And what he ſpeaks concerning thoſe *Human Canons* that *D. Manby* ſuppos'd *Obligatory* to the *Catholick Church*, Mr. Fr— ſuppoſes to be ſpoken of the *Canons* of our *National Church*.

So that if Mr. Fr— ever read and consider'd the *Passage* he Quotes, I cannot excuse him from the Guilt of down-right *Falshood* and *Prevarication*. For 'tis not possible to produce a more palpable Instance of it. If he never consider'd it at all (as I am in Charity inclin'd to believe, by his directing us to the Pages where it lies, in Mr. B—'s *Letter*, and where the *Falsification* appears to every Reader at first view) he shou'd beware of suffering his *Ill-will* and *Prejudice* to blind his Judgment so far, as to *Expose himself*, instead of *Exposing* Mr. B— to the just Censure of the Publick.

If he still Censure those *Expressions* as apply'd to those *Human Canons* that are suppos'd to be *Obligatory* to the *Catholick Church*, he does in effect justify the *Papal Supremacy*, and defends that *forreign Jurisdiction* which the Nation is sworn against.

The *Passage*, Numb. 2. in the same *Chap.* is unfairly Cited without any mention of the particular *supposed Case* which it refers to; and if consider'd with that reference, the *Expressions* are an undeniable *Inference* from that *Supposition*.

Again, Numb. 8. He makes it a *Scurrilous* and *Abusive Reflection* in Mr. B—, to call the 5th Canon a *Rigid* and *Sour* one, and never tells his Reader, That 'tis a Canon that denounces all *Excommunicate* that affirm the *Congregations* of Protestant Dissenters in this Kingdom to be *true* and *lawful Churches*; as if it were *Abusive* in us, to call that Canon *Rigid* and *Sour*, by which we are all *Unchurch'd*.

Again, Numb. 8, 9. He supposes Mr. B— to speak of the *Ceremonies* of the *Establish'd Church*, what is manifestly spoken of those of the *Romish Church* only. See *Let.* p. 11. and 13.

So *Ch.* III. Numb. 2, 3. He Cites, as Mr. B—'s *Scurrilous* and *Abusive Reflections*, what Mr. B— has borrowed from Bishop *Wilkins*, and Cites his *Authority* for. See *Rem.* p. 40. and p. 53, 54. And those *Passages* themselves do not refer to *Publick Prayers*, but to *Private Devotions*.

So Numb. 4. He applys to *Baptism* what is spoken of the *Lords Supper*. And Numb. 6. he mentions that as a *Reflection* upon their *Worship* in general, which is spoken only concerning that particular *Practice* of all the People's repeating the *Prayers* aloud after the Minister.

Again, *Ch.* IV. Numb. 2. What is expressly apply'd to the *Case* of a *Popish Convocation*, and of a *Council of Arrian Bishops*, Mr. Fr— with his usual *Sincerity* Cites as spoken of our *Convocations*. See *Let.* p. 53, 54.

Again, Numb. 3. he Cites these as Mr. B—'s Words: 'If the *Laws* of Christ must determine who are *Lawful Pastors*, then all *Diocesan Prelates* must be cashier'd from the Number of *Lawful Pastors*. Whereas Mr. B—'s Words are, 'If these be the *Laws* of Christ (as it were easie to prove, if that were deny'd) then all *Diocesan Prelates* must be cashier'd from the Number of *Lawful Pastors*, unless they can prove their *Office* instituted by Christ. Mr. Fr— is therefore desired to clear his *Sincerity*, in leaving out one half of Mr. B—'s Sentence, and in taking

no notice of the *Occasion* of it, viz. The applying *Bellar- mine's* Definition of the *Catholick Church* *, to the Exclusion of *Protestant Dissenters* out of it ; against which Mr. B— there argues, and only retorts the Argument on those that use it to that uncharitable Purpose.

* See Preface to the Letter.

Again, Numb. 4. What Mr. B— speaks concerning such *Bishops* as *Pope Victor*, who Excommunicated the *Assiatick Churches* for not keeping *Easter* on the same Day that he did ; Mr. Fr— with his wonted *Candour* Cites as spoken of the *Bishops* of the *Establiſh'd Church*, to whom the *Passage* has no Reference at all.

Again, Ch. V. Numb. 3, 4. he reckons it among Mr. B—'s *Scurrilous* and *Abusive Reflections*, for him to say, ' That Dr. *Stillingfleet* (Bishop of ' *Worcester*) durst not own an Ecclesiastical Governing Head of the ' Church of England, when this is evident Matter of Fact. For the Bishop was so wise as to foresee, that if he assign'd such an Ecclesiastical Governing Head to the *National Church*, he must make their *Canons* Obligatory to all the Members of that Church in point of Conscience antecedently to the *Civil Sanction*. And this might have brought him into the Danger of a *Premunire* by such *Statutes* as the 37 of *Hen. VIII. c. 17.* & *Edw. VI. c. 2.* and *1 Eliz. c. 1.* And therefore he chose rather to say, That a *National Consent* was as sufficient to make a *National Church*, as the Consent of all *Christians* to constitute the *Catholick Church* ; by which (as Mr. *Humphreys* in his *Answer* has demonstrated) he gave up the Cause to Mr. *Baxter* ; the *Catholick Church* being constituted a proper *Society*, as distinct from a *meer Community*, by its Consent to the Government of *Christ* as the *Universal Head* of it.

And this deserves the more to be taken notice of, because the late Patrons of the *Jus Divinum* of *Episcopacy* ascribe a *Legislative Power* to all Bishops ; whereas our *Laws* suppose their *Spiritual Jurisdiction* to be deriv'd from the *Crown*, and allow no *Canons* of our *Convocations* to be Obligatory at all, without the *Civil Sanction*. Nay, many of these *Authors* assert what they call (tho' very Groundlessly) the *Canons* of the *Catholick Church* to be Obligatory to us, and thereby endeavour to set up that *Foreign Jurisdiction* which these Kingdoms are Sworn against. And 'tis such *Writers* as these (and not Mr. B—) that oppose and strike at our *Civil Constitution*.

And to add no more, Mr. Fr— has the Confidence, Ch. V. Numb. 9. to number it among Mr. B—'s *Scurrilous Abusive Reflections*, that he applies the Words of *Festus* to St. Paul, to Mr. *Dodwell*, a noted *Non-jurant*, without ever taking notice of the *Occasion* of it, viz. His not only *Unchurching* all the *Reformed Churches*, but even degrading all the Members of those Churches, into *Beasts*, by denying 'em the Privilege of Immortality. And he groundlessly brings in Mr. Dr— for a Share in the Reflection, to whom neither the Character of *Vast Reading*, nor that of *Slender Judgment*, does belong.

You may, Sir, by this brief Specimen, see with what *Judgment* and *Honesty* Mr. Fr— has made up this invidious Collection: Of which no Notice would have been taken, but that it may fall into the Hands of some that have neither *Leisure* nor *Inclination* to be at the Pains of comparing it with Mr. B—'s Writings (out of which he pretends to Transcribe it;) and who would hardly suspect that a Man of Mr. Fr—'s Character could be guilty of so gross *Prewarication*, if such plain and convincing Evidence of it were not laid before them. Sir, I heartily wish that a nearer *Union* of all Protestants in *Affection* and *Interest*, may be the Happy Result of our Publick Councils, pursuant to Her MAJESTY's Gracious Intentions, declar'd by Her *Chief Governour* in this Kingdom: And am with all Respect,

Your most Faithful Humble Servant.

F I N I S.

